

MIDSTATE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

MARC

SPARK GAP

"Ham Radio News from Johnson County, Indiana"

Volume XIII No.09

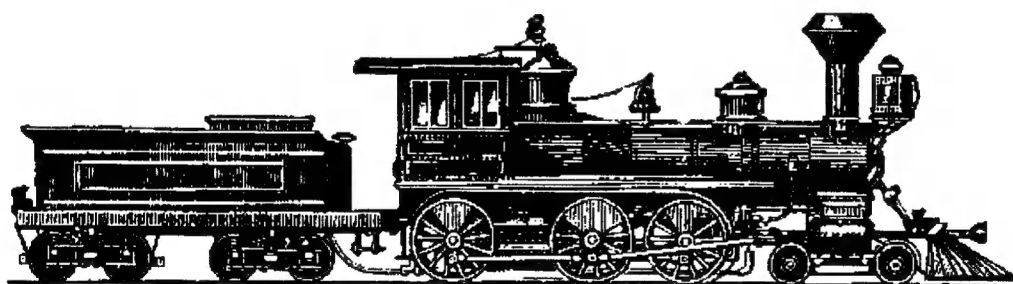
September 1997

Ride the Rails to Fun

LIVE STEAM MEETING

The MARC Club Car is scheduled to round the bend and pull into Mt. Nebo Station in Morgan County this weekend. Saturday, September 20th, the Mid-State ARC will ride the rails through the hills and hollars of Morgan county. Members of the **Indiana Live Steam Association** will conduct a personal tour of their 3/4 mile railroad park at

Ron Gaertner, WB9NVM, and Bruce McClary, KA9RWW, will be our hosts for the day. We will officially induct our newly elected officers following lunch. What better way to keep MARC on the right track than by combining a day of food, fun and riding the rails with the family. A map can be found on page four of this issue of the Spark Gap Newsletter. **ALL ABOARD.** See ya there! - NT9J



MT. NEBO
STATION
AHEAD

the base of Mt. Nebo. The park is located deep in the wooded hills of Morgan county on Rt. 252, four miles east of Martinsville. (See map for directions).

The club will provide sliced ham and soft drinks. This will be a pitch-in picnic where you can bring the entire family. The scheduled start time is 11 a.m. with lunch beginning at noon. The train rides will begin before lunch and continue through the early afternoon. Kids from five to seventy-five will love riding the 1/8 scale trains. The steam and electric engines pull small rail cars across tressels and through the woods for a day of fun with the family.

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SPARK GAP

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Membership Information

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club is a Franklin Based organization open to all Amateur Radio operators in central Indiana.

The MARC meets the third Saturday of each month in the training room of the Johnson County Emergency Operations Center at 1100 Hospital Road in Franklin, In.

The MARC operates a 2-meter repeater at 146.835 Mhz. Each club member has free access to the repeater and autopatch.

Annual dues are \$18.00. VE Testing follows each meeting from March through November.

Submit stories to the editor on disk or via e-mail by the 3rd of each month.

Send change-of-address info and membership application to the club treasurer @ MARC, P.O. Box 836, Franklin, In. 46131.

The Spark Gap is published monthly by the Mid-State ARC.



CLUB OFFICERS

President:

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H. 780-1803

Vice President:

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H. 535-9910

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RACES Director:

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H. 889-8962

Repeater Trustee:

Dave Julian, WB9YIG
H. 887-9504

Activities:

Jack Parker, NT9J
H. 881-0817

VE Team Coordinator:

Dave Wendt, KA9OOH
H. 974-1488

CLUB MEETING

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 20TH

11 A.M.

LIVE STEAM PARK, MT. NEBO

VE TESTING

9 A.M. E.O.C.

Masonic Home Helpers

The annual Masonic Home Festival was held in Franklin on Sunday, August 24, 1997. Though the crew was sprinkled upon at various times, the downpour did not come until after MARC members had departed. Joe Rogers-KF9LQ, served as net control. He was assisted by Barb Rogers-KB9NOG. Vernie Parton -

AA9LR, was on the entrance gate and ended up directing traffic. Construction of new duplex housing had the former parking area torn up. Dave Julian - WB9YIG, with his ever pleasant smile

and winning ways, masterfully handled all that came his way (a few hundred cars). Rich Jaskinski, KB9LJM and Paul Roman, KA9PPG, rode the trams and assisted the guests with directions and a helping hand.

A couple first-aid situations occurred that were handled without the need of direct ham involvement. J.R. Osborne-KB9HSE, mourned the absence of the customary food truck. The promised coffee and doughnuts did not materialize. But J.R. assisted Vernie with traffic and enjoyed the antique tractor pull, a new festival activity this year. He was especially taken with the giant smoke belching steam engine. "Just like the one they had on the farm when he was a boy!" He also helped with the parade contingent that was staged at the Franklin Police Station.

"I love a parade"

Joan Kemp- N9DON, a Masonic Home Employee, served as a source of information and liason as did Walt Howard- N9FWF, retired Chaplain of the Masonic Home. Bob Doles- WB9AYB, as usual, was on his ham radio equipped scooter running from place to place finding answers to questions, relaying information and passing out lunch tickets to the hams. The parade this year was a bit larger than usual and went through downtown



Franklin. The Franklin Masonic Lodge and City Police Stations were staging areas for the parade. Communication with the Masonic authorities was maintained from those staging areas. WB9AYB accompanied the parade along its route and avoided being trampled by the horses which were "spooked" by the railroad tracks and hesitated to cross them. The assistance of all who participated was greatly appreciated. We could have used an additional ham to relieve the rest of us for lunch break and "necessary" breaks. Dave Ashbaugh, the acting Home administrator, called WB9AYB Monday after the event to express his overflowing thanks and to ensure that MARC hams would be available next year. In the course of the conversation, he stated that his father was an amateur radio op. He further stated that the contribution of the hams was so vital to the event that he wants them involved in the planning, beginning in January for next year's festival.--WB9AYB

Flat Rock Run

Cooler than normal temperatures August 9th greeted Amateur Radio operators as they gathered in Flat Rock, Indiana to provide communications for the 4th annual 7K Run. Rick Reneau-KB9NDF assigned the small troop of volunteers to their respective positions around the five mile course. Vernon Gill-N9QBO served as net control. Over three hundred runners from around Indiana ran or walked the circuit. Our thanks to everyone who came out early to help with the event. According to several attendees, the all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast wasn't bad either. -MARC

Solar trade winds

Scientists using the joint European Space Agency (ESA)/NASA Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO) spacecraft have discovered "jet streams" or "rivers" of hot, electrically charged gas called plasma flowing beneath the surface of the Sun. They also found features similar to trade winds that transport gas beneath the Sun's fiery surface. These new findings will help them understand the famous sunspot cycle and associated increases in solar activity that can affect the Earth with power and communications disruptions. The observations are the latest made by the Solar Oscillations Investigation (SOI) group at Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA, and they build on discoveries by the SOHO science team over the past year. The solar belts are more than 40 thousand miles across and they contain "winds" that move about ten miles per hour relative to their surroundings.--NASA

BIRTHDAYS

YESTURDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

JULY BIRTHDAYS

KIM MILES	KB9JQO	7/1
DAVID JORDAN	KB9LJO	7/8
JOE ROGERS	KF9LQ	7/10
ANGELA GRUBB	KB9LJM	7/13
BRIAN SMITH	WW9A	7/16
CHARLIE SEARS	N9MEW	7/16
KENNETH POE	KB9JUM	7/17
BRUCE MCCLARY	KA9RWW	7/19
GREG LACY	N9XDR	7/20

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

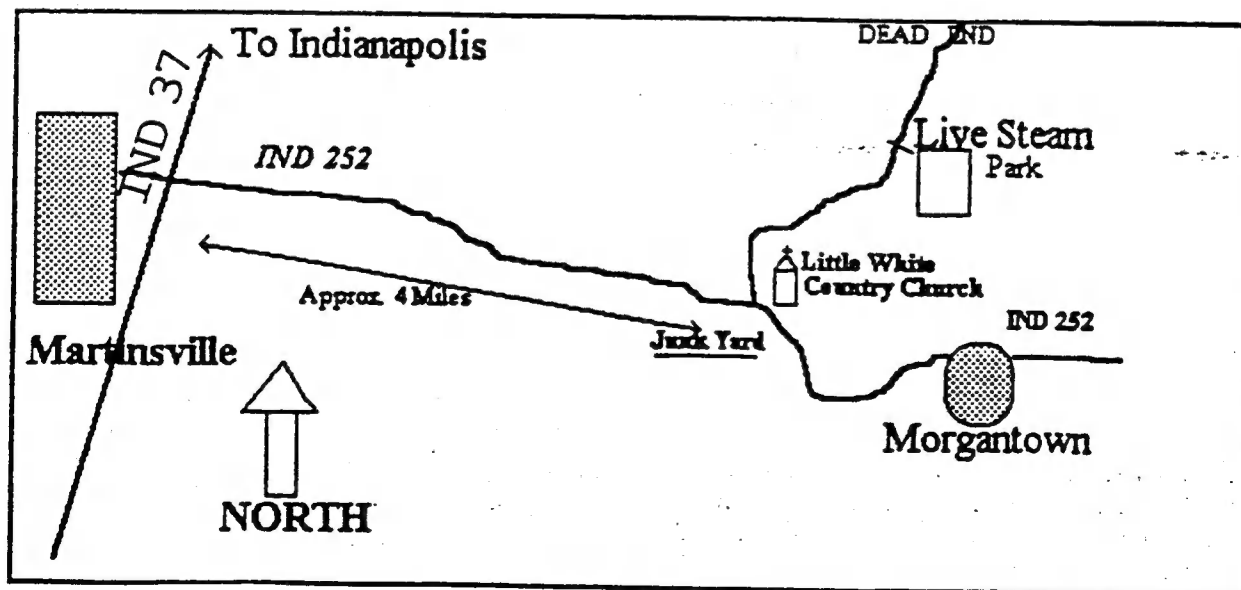
RICHARD TRUE	KB9NM	8/5
DONALD PING	KF9TT	8/7
CHUCK CRIST	WB9IHS	8/15

GEORGE BURTON	N9TUN	8/20
GEORGE CAMMACK	W9MLN	8/20
OMER MCGEE	WD9JJU	8/21
BARB COHOON	KB9GWV	8/21
BERNARD MEYER	KC4CR	8/21
JESSE MIKEAL	N9KBC	8/28
ROY BARNES	N9PFZ	8/31

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

JOHN GUYANT	NC9B	9/1
BOB WHITEIS	KB9KQF	9/12
DAVID RENEAU	AA9KT	9/12
JEFF BAILEY	KB9NJE	9/15
BILL CLOWERS	KF9UJ	9/17
WALTER PERRY	W8ENM	9/17
DAVID HALL	KB9EKM	9/19
JACK VOILES	KB9IPY	9/21
JEWEL JUDKINS	KB9ITF	9/28
ROSS MARLIN	N9DZR	9/28
WILLIAM BENNETT	KG9DR	9/28

Follow map to Live Steam Park at Mt. Nebo



Indy to Belize

"Calling Bruce Miller in Gallon Jug, this is Jon Haskell, over." What may sound like your average CB call, is normal radio procedure on the 2-meter repeaters in Belize. Amateur radio operators in this remote part of Central America operate on a very casual basis. Belize, formerly known as British Honduras, is about the size of Massachusetts. The country is a mixture of fertile fields, lush rain forests, dense jungle, spectacular mountains and two highways. And neither of those narrow paved strips lead to Gallon Jug. For this trip Jon and I must take bumpy back roads and a long dirt trail to reach Gallon Jug. Our mission is to visit Dr. Bruce Miller and his wife Carolyn at their jungle home on a 130,000 acre private game preserve in northwestern Belize. They are zoologists from New York who have spent the last eight years studying jungle wild life in Belize.

Jon Haskell met Dr. Miller via amateur radio three years ago. Bruce operates from his one story jungle home using the call sign of V3JU. As I found out, his Kenwood TS-450 and Mosley tri-band beam, make contacting the US very easy. During our late morning visit I was able to contact Vernie Parton, AA9LR via the Maritime Mobile Net. He patched me through the phone so I could talk to my wife Dee Dee at her office in Indianapolis. Don't ya just love modern communications?



Lord Bikal's tomb in Palanque along the northern coast of Mexico made for a rapid pulse. Climbing the 12-story structure stressed even the young at heart.



A hot-musty climb greeted visitors when they climbed down into the tomb.

Unfortunately, the 20-meter radio that Jon installed in the Land Rover had not been working as well as expected. My 10-minute QSO with the YL made up for all the failed mobile attempts.

While finishing my second iced tea I had a bonus conversation with Paul Easley KA9KAI/TG who had been trying to contact us from his home in Guatemala. We had a nice conversation, again thanks to Vernie. Paul and I could not hear each other so we used Vernie as our relay. Joe Rogers-KF9LQ even jumped in for a brief QSO using his newly installed tower and HF beams. It was truly a great day of amateur radio.

After lunch we began our two and one-half hour trip back up the dusty trail headed for the small town of Orange Walk. The Millers were headed back out into the jungle to set up traps to capture bats that evening. We promised to stop by the next time "we were in the neighborhood".

Jon's Land Rover was equipped with almost every type radio a ham might need on a long trip. We had two HF rigs, one for 20-meters and the other to send APRS beacons showing our location. The 20-meter radio was later retuned to the 27-Megahertz band and married to a CB antenna so we could communicate with the other 24 vehicles in our convoy. We also carried a dual band 2-meter/70 cm rig and two dual band HT's for emergencies. At one point we even carried one of the new Motorola "family band" radios so we could keep track of one of the Land Rovers who didn't have any other communications equipment. It's amazing how well Citizens Band radio can work when people use them properly in an area that has very few CB'ers.

See BELIZE ---next page

Belize--continued from page 5

We later discovered that Jon had installed the GSR HF radio too close to the antenna tuner. That desensed the tuner and distorted the audio forcing us to reduce power output.

The lap top computer with it's APRS maps and the GPS receiver kept us from getting lost in a foreign country. That made the 6200-mile round trip through Mexico and Belize easier despite bad roads and poor road signs. It was a long way to carry medical supplies, but well worth the effort when you saw how appreciative the local people were.

After dropping our medical supplies off in Orange Walk Jon and I made several side trips to ancient Mayan cities. Archeologists are just now unearthing some of the Mayan ruins located deep in the jungles. Corocol is a 1600 acre city still covered by decades of thick jungle growth. The trip to Corocol took us three hours from the main road through the beautiful pine forest, across crystal clear rivers and into an area rarely visited by most tourists. Only the sounds of nature could be heard above the crunch of leather boots as we carefully made our way down narrow paths that lead from one temple to another. Many of the treasures discovered here date back to 300 BC.

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Jon-KB9CML's well stocked Land Rover took us over 6200 miles through the US, Mexico and Belize in 15-days.

The Mayan city of Lamanni is located on the New River in central Belize where the river widens to form a lagoon. This was the thickest jungle we had encountered yet. Vegetation was so large and thick you could get lost venturing off the main trail. Only the mosquitoes knew the way back. The most graphic display of Mayan architecture was seen while visiting the city of Palenca in northeastern Mexico. Here archeologist have uncovered and repaired the many buildings and temples. The most interesting was the temple of Lord Bikal. To see the king's tomb you have to climb up the front of the 12-story temple, then down ninety stairs inside to the small room that held Lord Bikal's remains. Those ninety stairs in an un-air conditioned building could really stress your lung power. By the time we climbed back down the front of the temple our knees were like jelly. Of course, that isn't to be confused with the peanut butter and jelly sandwich we later had for lunch. Only the best lodging and food for these two amateur radio adventurers, but well worth the trip to see one of Central Americas truly beautiful and historic countries. -Jack, NT9J

